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ENG 5006-001: Modern Sexualities

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Eng. 5006: Modernist Sexualities

Spring 2001

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Goals: I have two main goals for the class. 1. To get a better understanding of British fiction of the period 1890-1928. This is a somewhat unconventional period, bridging the “transition” and “high modernism,” and my syllabus is somewhat unconventional, including both canonical and noncanonical writers. My goal in this respect is to redefine “modernism” so that it includes the cultural tensions and upheavals of the 1890s and early 1900s as well as the stylistic experimentation of the 1920s. 2. To begin to understand how the representation of sexuality in literature responds to and shapes cultural shifts. Many historians argue that in the late nineteenth century, a change occurred in the way people wrote and talked about sexuality. Sexologists became increasingly concerned with categorizing sexual behavior as either “normal” or “deviant,” while social commentators discussed eugenics, social purity, the birth rate, venereal disease, unmarried women, prostitution, homosexuality, and subsidized motherhood—all concerns related to the regulation of sexuality. We’ll discuss how the novels of the period entered into and shaped these conversations.

Policies: English Department statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) --has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Requirements: paper (10-15 pp.), final exam, two oral presentations, careful preparation of reading assignments, journal, and participation in class discussion

Grades: 20% exam
20% presentations/participation
30% journal
30% paper

Presentations: Each member of the class will be asked to do two oral presentations of 10-20 minutes each. One should be on a critical essay regarding the assigned text; another on a related cultural phenomenon: an event, book, or figure. I have tried to list several essays for each week, so that you may choose from among them; an * indicates I have the essay in my office and would be happy to make you a copy. Many are also available at the library. While only the presenter

MUST read the critical essay assigned for each week, I urge you all to read whatever you have time for.

Sometimes critical essays are difficult or make references to knowledge you may not have. For research on the cultural phenomenon/historical event, you may have trouble finding relevant material. PLEASE COME SEE ME if you have questions or just want to talk over the reading. It is your obligation to gain an adequate understanding of the material before you present it to the class.

Journals: In preparation for each class, I'd like you to write about the reading for that week in your journal (about 300-500 words). You need not focus solely on sexuality; comment on whatever strikes you as surprising, disturbing, unclear, or thought-provoking. As the semester progresses, you might also look for connections and contrasts among the works read. At the end of your entry, write 1-3 questions that grow out of your reading. These could be straightforward questions, to which you simply want an answer, or issues you're interesting in discussing as a class.

After each class, I'd like you to write again BEFORE you begin the next week's reading, commenting on the discussion, pinpointing where you agree or disagree with the class's readings of the novels.

Keep your journal in mind as a place to explore possible paper topics, to link ideas raised in presentations to the literary texts, to see connections between your own ideas and others'.

Paper: Your paper could grow out of an oral presentation, or out of a particular interest in one of the assigned texts, or out of your interest in another work from the period that you feel could be read profitably in terms of its treatment of sexuality. I will meet with you individually to discuss topics. Plan ahead; any research will probably require interlibrary loans, which often take at least two weeks.

Tentative syllabus

W Jan 10: introduction to the class

W 17: Wilde, *Picture of Dorian Gray*.

The trial of Oscar Wilde

"The Disappearance of the Homosexual in the *Picture of Dorian Gray*." Jeff Nunokawa. In *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature*. Ed. George E. Haggert and Bonnie Zimmerman.*

Bristow, Joseph. "Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, and gross indecency." In *Sexual Sameness*, J. Bristow, ed.*

Martin, Robert. "Parody and Homage: The Presence of Pater in *Dorian Gray*." *Victorian Newsletter* 63 (Spring 1983): 15-18.

W 24: Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*

James M. Harding. "The Signification of Arabella's Missile: Feminine Sexuality, Masculine Anxiety and Revision in *Jude the Obscure*." *Journal of Narrative Technique*. 26 (Winter 1996): 85-111.

W 31: **Jude**

Richard Dellamora, "Male Relations in TH's *Jude the Obscure*." *Papers on Language and Literature*. 27 (Fall 1991): 453-72.

Nordau's *Degeneration*

Contemporary responses to *Jude*.

W Feb 7: Showalter, ***Daughters of Decadence***

Martha Vicinus, "The Adolescent Boy: Fin-de-Siecle Femme Fatale?"

Kathy Psomiades, "Still Burning from this Strangling Embrace": Vernon Lee on Desire and Aesthetics" both in Richard Dellamora, ed. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence* *

The Men's and Women's Club

Biographical background on Schreiner, Egerton, Lee, Mew, OR Levenson.

The Yellow Book

W 14: Wells, ***Ann Veronica***

The women's movement and sexuality (1880s-1914)

Allett, John. "The Ambivalent Feminism of *Ann Veronica*." *Studies in the Humanities* 20 (June 1993): 63-75.

The birth control movement (1880s-1920)

Government-supported maternity

The WSPU

W 21: Forster, ***Maurice***

The publication history of *Maurice*

Harned, Jon. "Becoming Gay in E.M. Forster's *Maurice*." *Papers on Language and Literature*. 29 (Winter 1993): 49-66.

Fletcher, John. "Forster's Self-Erasure: Maurice and the Scene of Masculine Love." *Sexual Sameness*, Joseph Bristow, ed. *

W 28: Mansfield, ***Stories***: "Bliss," "Prelude," "At the Bay"

D'Arcy, "Katherine Mansfield's Bliss: The Rare Fiddle as Emblem of the Political and Sexual Alienation of Women." *Papers on Language and Literature* 35 (Summer 1999): 244-69.

Moran, Patricia. *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf*.

Mortimer, Armine. "Fortifications of Desire: Reading the Second Story in Katherine Mansfield's Bliss." *Narrative* 2 (Jan 1994): 41-52.

W March 7: Lawrence, ***Women in Love***

The prologue to *Women in Love*

Ingersoll, Earl. "Staging the Gaze in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*." *Studies in the Novel*. 26 (Fall 1994): 268-80.

Lawrence's legal problems.

Spring Break

W 21: Lawrence, ***Women in Love***

Otto Weininger

The Lawrence/Mansfield/Murry relationship

Doherty, Gerald. "Ars Erotica or Scientia Sexualis? Narrative Vicissitudes in D. H. Lawrence's women in Love. *Journal of Narrative Technique* 26 (Spring 1996): 137-57.

Marie Stopes, *Married Love*

W 28: Bryher, *Development and Two Selves*.

Havelock Ellis

H.D.

Collecott, Diana. "Bryher's Two Selves as Lesbian Romance." In *Romance Revisited*. Jackie Stacey and Lynne Pearce, eds.*

W April 4: Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*

Backus, Margo. "Sexual Orientation in the (Post) Imperial Nation: Celticism and Inversion Theory in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 15 (Fall 1996): 253-66.

Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman." *Signs* 9 (1984): 557-75.

W 11: *Well of Loneliness*

Marcus, Jane. "Sapphistory: The Woolf and the Well." *Lesbian Texts and Contexts*. Karla Jay ed. [if you know Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*]*

Glasgow, Joanne. "What's Nice Lesbian like you Doing in the Church of Torquemada." also in Jay.*

The obscenity trial

W 18: *Orlando*

Knopp, Sherron. "If I saw you would you kiss me?" Sapphism and the Subversiveness of VW's *Orlando*. *PMLA* 103 (1988): 31*

Cervetti, Nancy. "In the Breeches, Petticoats, and Pleasures of *Orlando*. *Journal of Modern Literature* 20. (Winter 1996): 165-75.*

Rossel, David. "The Significance of Constantinople in *Orlando*. *Papers on Language and Literature*. 28 (Fall 1992): 398-416.

Schaffer, Talia. "Posing *Orlando*." *Sexual Artifice*. Ed. Ann Kibbey et al. 26-63.*

Bruns, Christy. "Re-dressing Feminist Identities: Tensions between Essential and Constructed Selves in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. *Twentieth Century Literature* 40 (Fall 1994): 342-64.

W 25: Review/discussion

There will be a final exam during final exam week.

Below is a very selective collection of resources. Come ask if you have questions, particularly about works on individual authors.

Modernism

Beckson, Karl. London in the 1890s.

Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1914*
 Bradbury, Malcolm, and James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism: 1890- 1930*.
 Ellmann, Richard. *Edwardians and Late Victorians*.
 Ellmann, Richard, and Charles Feidelson Jr., eds. *The Modern Tradition*
 Faulkner, Peter. *Modernism*
 Hynes, Samuel. *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*
 Rose, Jonathan. *The Edwardian Temperament*

Modernism/Gender/Sexuality

Ardis, Ann. *New Women, New Novels*
 Benstock, Shari. *Women of the Left Bank*
 Chamberlin, J. Edward, ed. *Degeneration: The Dark side of Progress*
 Dellamora, Richard, Ed. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*
 ---. *Masculine Desire: the Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*
 Dijkstra, Bram. *Idols of Perversity*
 Doan, Laura, ed. *The Lesbian Postmodern*
 ---. *Old Maids to Radical Spinsters*
 Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*
 Gilbert, Susan and Sandra Gubar. *No Man's Land*.
 Jeffreys, Sheila. *The Spinster and her Enemies*.
 Rado, *The Modern Androgyne Imagination: A Failed Sublime*
 Scott, Bonnie Kime, ed. *The Gender of Modernism*.
 Showalter, Elaine. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle*
 Snyder, Katherine. *Bachelors, Manhood and the Novel*.
 Walkowitz, Judith. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*

The history and theory of gender and sexuality

Barret-Ducroco, *Love in the Time of Victoria*
 Bland, Lucy and Laura Doan, *Sexology in Culture*
 Butler, *Gender Trouble*
 Chauncey, George. "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance." *Salmagundi* 58-9 (Fall-Winter 1982): 114-46.
 Garber, *Vested Interests*
 Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men*.
 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*
 Laqueur, *The Making of Sex*
 Lynch, Michael. "Here is Adhesiveness: From Friendship to Homosexuality." *Victorian Studies* 29 (Autumn 1985): 67-96.
 Mason, Michael. *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*
 Murphy, Peter. *Fictions of Masculinity: Crossing Cultures, Crossing Sexualities*
 Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." In *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. Ed. Ann Snitow et al.
 Sedgwick, Eve, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*

---. The Epistemology of the Closet

Weeks, Jeffrey. Making Sexual History.

---. Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800.

The web also has valuable resources including Voice of the Shuttle, Victorian Web, Index of Web Sites on Modernism. Modernism Timeline.

The journals Modernism/Modernity and Modern Fiction Studies are available on-line to subscribers to Project Muse (includes EIU).

The library also has periodicals from the period:

Yellowbook

Blackwood's (1902-)

Edinburgh Review (1900-)

Mind (on psychology and philosophy)

Times Literary Supplement (1902-)

Review of Reviews (1890-)